The Right Way To Promote *Reformation.*

In A

SERMON,

Preached at

Wazzington,

Upon the 18*th.* of *Octob.* 1698.

At the Appointment of the Miniſters there Met.

And, at the Requeſt of Some, Publiſhed for the uſe of Others.

By *J. NAYLOR* Miniſter of the Goſpel.

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BRITISH MUSEUM

A

SERMON

Preached at

Warrington.

MAT. VII. V.

Thou Hypocrite first cast out the Beam out of thine own Eye; and then shalt thou see clearly, to cast out the Mote out of thy Brothers Eye.

THE Divine Dispensations of late, both in a way of Mercy and Judgment, have so loud a Voice in this Kingdom, as cannot but awaken a just sense of a Necessity of Reformation, in all that are not lul'd asleep, upon the lap of Pleasure, by the Syren Songs of these sensual Sublunary things. God is trying this Nation in both these Methods, and

18

ſurely none ſo Ignorant, as not to know that both theſe ways do ſtrongly oblige, to an holy and Reformed courſe! If God do ſet us up as a mark, at which he intends to ſhoot the Arrows of his Diſpleaſure; it highly concerns us, to meet him in the ways of his Judgments, by a ſpeedy and ſincere Repentance. And if he unſtring his Bow, and put up into his Quiver, the impoyſoned Arrows, that were prepared for our deſtruction; He expects ſo ſignal a Mercy ſhould ſoften and melt our hearts, and bring them into an Holy and Heavenly frame and Temper.

Do I need to tell you, how lately God was graciouſly pleaſed, to Remove the Judgment of a long and expenſive War; and how deſireable a Peace was before it was concluded? And ſurely now the Enjoyment of Liberty and Property; and the ſetling Peace within our Borders, under the favourable Influences of good Rulers; is not the leaſt of Temporal Bleſſings! God hath huſht away Wars from amongſt us, and wonderfully ſcattered our fears: And ſhall not ſo merciful a diſpenſation excite us to a vigorous proſecution of an Holy War, proclaimed between us and our Sins? A War in which we were very early engaged; for in our Baptiſm, we were liſted under Chriſt, as the Generaliſſimo of all who draw the Sword to Sacrifice their Luſts; and to fight againſt the World,

World, the Fleſh and the Devil. And ſurely as the conſummation of a long deſired Peace, with our Forreign Enemies, affords a favourable Juncture for the advancement of this great Work; ſo it is a powerful Obligation upon us to ſet to it in good earneſt.

No ſooner were the Children of *Iſrael* come out of *Egyptian* Bondage, but they were called to renew their Covenant with God; and what cauſe have we to take up the Words of * *Ezra*; *Seeing that thou our God, haſt given us ſuch a deliverance as this: Should we again break thy Commandements, and joyn in affinity with a People of theſe Abominations; wouldſt not thou be angry with us; till thou hadſt conſumed us; ſo that there ſhould be no remnant, nor eſcaping?* * *Ezra* 9. 13, 14.

But tho' the Sword be put up, and the War ended; yet for our Unfruitfulneſs under, and Unthankfulneſs for, ſo great a Mercy: God hath been threatning us in theſe *Northern* parts with another Judgment, nothing leſs or Inferior to that which he hath lately removed, (*viz.*) a Judgment of Famine.

The Holy God for thoſe vile Abominations, and groſs Prophaneneſs, committed amongſt us; hath been threatning to break the Staff of Bread, and to ſend cleanneſs into our Teeth. How hath God been puniſhing us with Immoderate Wet and Rain, and with a late and thin Harveſt?

So that our former Deliverances will not ſecure us from future Ruin; if we harden our ſelves in a ſinful way, and wicked courſe. If we ſlight God's Mercies, we cannot think to eſcape the ſmart of Judgments: For they that will not learn Righteouſneſs, by the mild and gentle methods of Divine Patience, and Kindneſs, muſt expect to be taught, as the Men of * *Succoth*, *With the Thorns and Briars of the Wilderneſs*, We Read that the Men of † *Sodom* were Reſcued from Captivity by *Abraham*'s Sword, not long before they were conſumed by Fire and Brimſtone from Heaven. And ungrateful *Iſrael* periſhed in the Wilderneſs, after their miraculous deliverance from *Egyptian* Bondage and ſervitude. Now God forbid, that all our great Deliverances, and Signal Mercies, ſhould be attended with ſo ſad a conſequent, as to harden us in Sin and ripen us for Deſtruction.

* *Judg.* 8. 16.

† *Gen.* 14. 12, 13, 14.

And as this is a Juncture, wherein God is thus calling upon us, to put away our Sins, and to endeavour the Reformation both of our ſelves, and others, * *That Iniquity may not be our Ruin*: So our Terreſtrial Gods (as Magiſtrates are ſometimes called) have vigouroufly ſet themſelves to the Advancement of this ſo neceſſary a Work. How many Pious Proclamations have been iſſued out within the ſpace of Eight or Nine years? Requiring all

* *Pſal.* 82. 6.

all Magiſtrates, Civil and Eccleſiaſtical, in their Reſpective Stations, to execute the Laws of this Realm againſt Prophaneneſs and Immorality, as they would Anſwer it to Allmighty God: and upon pain of their Majeſty's (and now of his Majeſty's) higheſt Diſpleaſure: complaining that by a long continued neglect, and connivance of the Magiſtrates, and Officers concern'd; theſe diſolute Enormities had univerſally ſpread themſelves, to the great diſhonour of God, and the ſcandal of our holy Religion.

Theſe Proclamations have been ſeconded by ſeveral Learned and Pious Biſhops, in their Letters to their Clergy, of their ſeveral and Reſpective Dioceſſes; enjoyning them to Preach againſt the Sins of the Day, and Place wherein they live, and take care they go before their Flocks in an holy and exemplary way of Living.

And for the more effectual ſuppreſſing of all Immorality and Prophaneneſs, and curbing the Exorbitances of this Age; I need not ſurely number up the particular Acts, and Laws, that have been made by the late Parliament, againſt Drunkenneſs, Whoredome, Prophane Swearing and Curſing, and the notorious Prophanation of the Holy Sabbath.

And tho' it hath been an old ſaying, that few Nations have better Laws, and worſe executed then we have; yet for the re-

triveing the honour of the *Engliſh* Nation; for averting God's Anger, preventing of Impending Judgments, and for the Reviveing of Religion, and the power of Godlineſs, which hath been ſo long dead and ſo greatly traduc'd among us; there are not a few at this day, of all Ranks and Qualities of Men, throughout the Nation; that are willing to help forward this Bleſſed Work of a Reformation. And through the bleſſing of God, upon the endeavours of ſome holy *Lots* of this Age; who have been vexed with the filthy Converſation of the Wicked; there hath been a conſiderable check, and ſtop put to the Impetuous torrent of Impiety and Prophaneneſs; where before it uſed to overflow the Banks.

Surely then it highly concerns us all, in our Reſpective places and Capacities, to purge out the old Leaven of Sin and Wickedneſs; and to ſeek the Reformation both of our ſelves and others! And to bleſs God there are any amongſt us, who are free and forward, to draw forth the Sword of Juſtice, and ſmite therewith, all Impudent and Impenitent Sinners, who have hitherto made a mock at Sin, and have put on a whores forehead in committing of it. I ſay, there are not a few Juſtices of the Peace amongſt us; who (to their Honour be it ſpoken) have openly declar'd their willingneſs, to Execute the

Laws

Laws made against Prophaneneſs, and Debauchery: as was lately heard in their charge, at the Privy and Quarter Seſſions of the Peace, where they publickly Profeſſed, they would (upon due Information) proceed to puniſh all Offenders, according to the nature of the Offence committed by them; whether it be Drunkenneſs, Whoredom, Prophane Swearing and Curſing, or the Prophanation of the holy Sabbath.

And are there any here that have the face to ſay, Miniſters are obliged to Preach againſt Sin and Vice, and Magiſtrates obliged to puniſh it: and yet they themſelves may ſit ſtill, and do nothing in it, but be idle ſpectators in this hard and difficult undertaking? I will but ask ſuch Perſons this ſingle queſtion. Are you under the Sacred Vows of the Chriſtian Religion, and have you Sworn to be faithful to the Kingdom and Intereſt of Jeſus Chriſt, Manfully to fight under his Banner, who is the Captain and Leader of our Salvation; and yet think your ſelves not concern'd in a Work of Reformation? O Egregious folly and madneſs!

Tho' this Introduction be already too long, yet I muſt ſolicite your Patience a little longer, before I come to conſider the Text: For I cannot omit Informing ſome and Reminding others, that at the opening of theſe Itinerant Lectures, or Monthly Exerciſes;

Exercises; it was by a Reverend Brother very well, and warmly proved a Duty, upon all Persons, not only Magistrates and Ministers, but also others, in their places; to help forward this glorious enterprise of a Blessed Reformation. I must make so far bold with that Sermon, as from it to tell you, that the Execution of Justice stands upon these two Bottoms. *First*, It depends upon proving the matter of Fact, or the giving due Information before a Lawful Magistrate. *Secondly*, In Executing the Penalty of the Law upon the Offender, so informed against. So that in order to the suppressing of Sin and Wickedness, it is primarily necessary, the Person before whom the Sin be committed, take care to inform the Magistrate of it; and then secondarily, the Magistrate proceed to punish it. And if either the Informer, or the Magistrate, be remiss in their Respective Capacities, Justice is obstructed, the Efficacy of the Law is Null'd, Sin goes unpunished, and the holy God more and more Provoked. Men cry out, against the Non-Execution of Justice, and complain of the illness of their Magistrates; whereas (indeed and in truth) the great fault is amongst private Persons: Justice lies obstructed here, when they connive at Sinners, and neglect to give Information of the Sins committed before them, and in their presence.

Now

Now after this long Preface, wherein I have ſpent but too much time; I ſhall bring in the Text under this Concluſion, which was the Subject chiefly inſiſted upon; the firſt of theſe Lectures, (*viz.*) That it is the duty of all Perſons in their Reſpective Places and Capacities, to help forward a Work of Reformation. This being a duty then ſo fully proved upon all Perſons; I have ſince thought with my ſelf, what is firſt to be done in this needful Work, and which is the beſt way, to forward this ſo Neceſſary and Important a Duty; or what courſe we ſhould take to promote the Work of Reformation: And thereupon made choice of this Text.

Thou Hypocrite firſt caſt the Beam out of thine own Eye, and then ſhalt thou ſee clearly to caſt out the Mote out of they Brothers Eye.

This Chapter is part of that excellent Sermon Chriſt Preached on the Mount; but I muſt not take time to give you the Analiſis of it; nor would I be tedious in clearing the Coherence of theſe words, with what goes before them. And therefore that I may briefly prepare my way to the Text, there are two things in the beginning of this Chapter to be noted by us.

1. We have our deareſt Lord, flatly Prohibiting, and ſharply Reproving, all raſh and Precipitous judging of others, *verſe* the 1ſt. *Judge not*, &c. 2. We

2. We have him enforceing this his Prohibition and Reproof, by ſeveral Reaſons and Arguments.

1. By our Raſh cenſuring and Condemning others; we render our ſelves obnoxious to the Juſt cenſure and Judgment of the great God, *verſe* the 1*ſt*. *Judge not that ye be not Judged.*

2. We ſhould not thus raſhly Judge and cenſure others; becauſe we are ſure to be paid in our own coyn, *verſe* the 2*d*. *For with what Judgment ye Judge, ye ſhall be Judged; and with what Meaſure ye meet, it ſhall be Meaſured to you again.*

3. We ſhould avoid this Sin of an unwary and uncharitable Judging of others; becauſe we may poſſibly, be guilty of ſome greater fault and crime our ſelves, *verſe* the 3*d*. *And why beholdeſt thou the Mote that is in thy Brothers Eye, but conſidereſt not the Beam that is in thine own Eye?* The Word * βλέπεις in the * Orriginal ſignifies ſomething more then a bare beholding and ſeeing of anothers fault: For it imports a nice and curious prying into the faults and failings of other Perſons; it ſignifies a curious and critical Eye, in inſpecting other Mens Actions, with an intent and purpoſe to Reprove them.

4. This is ſuch a thing as renders us very unfit and improper Perſons to Reform others, *verſe* the 4*th*. *Or how wilt thou ſay to thy Brother, let me pull out the Mote*

out

ut of thine Eye; and behold a Beam is in thine own Eye?

5. This rash and uncharitable Judging of others, with an aptness to spie faults in them, doth carry the Face of great Insincerity and Hipocrisie in it. *Verse* the 5*th*. *Thou Hipocrite first cast the Beam out of thine own eye, and then shalt thou see clearly, to cast out the mote, out of thy Brothers eye.*

No surer note and Mark of Hipocrisie; then a forwardness to Judge and condemn others, for that which a man is Guilty of himself.

There are two things in the Text to be spoken to, which may be comprehended in these two Propositions

1. *Propo.* That it is a Christian Fraternal part and duty to cast the Mote out of our Brothers eye.

2. *Propo.* That we may more Regularly comfortably and Effectually performe this Christian Brotherly Office; we must first of all cast the Beams out of our own eyes.

I shall say something to the First of these Propositious; tho I do not intend to insist much upon it because I shall rather take it for granted, then make my Business to prove it. My work is to direct, rather then to excite or Perswade, to Reformation. First cast the Beam out of thine own eye; and then shalt thou see clearly to cast the Mote out of thy Brothers eye.

And

And do I need to tell you who is mea here by Brother in the Text? For tho' t word Brother, hath various Acceptatio in Holy Scripture, yet we need not mu Scruple the uſe of the word in this plac The word is ſometimes put and uſed prope ly, for a natural Brother; which is eith an half Brother, both by one Father, b not by a Mother as *Iſaac* and *Iſhmael*; or full Brother, both by Father and Mother, *Joſeph* and *Benjamin*, *Cain* and *Abell*, *Eſ* and *Jacob*. And ſometimes it is put and u ed Improperly; for a Kinſman, companio or Neighbour, a Friend, and an acquaintan The word is put for all theſe in holy Scrip ture, and if you pleaſe, you may take it in a theſe Reſpects; becauſe unto all of theſe, w are in duty Bound and Obliged to do all th good we can; tho' by many Expoſitours, th word Brother in the Text, is interpreted o our Neighbour. Yet if our Brother in an of theſe Reſpects I have Named; That i if either our Natural Brother, or any of ou Relations, Neighbours, Friends or Acquain tance have a Mote in their eye, it is a Chri tian Brotherly part to caſt it out.

And may it be thought Neceſſary to ſhe you what is meant by a Mote or Beam in th eye, and what is meant by caſting of the out. By motes, we may underſtand the ou ward and externall Acts of Sin, which w ſhould Labour to caſt out of our Brothe life. And by Beams in our own; we ma un

derſtand, either Sins that are in themſelves
reat, or elſe the ſame Sins, which our Bro-
ier commits, that are Beams in us, by be-
olding them in our Brother, but not in our
elves. This is a Beam (a Monſtrous Sin)
be caſt out of all of us, when we can Spie
aults in others but none in our Selves.

So that the Summ and Sence of the pro-
oſition is this. It is a Chriſtian Brotherly
art and duty, to reclaime and reforme our
rother, to prevent his Sining, and to
cover him out of a wicked and Impi-
s courſe of life; if fallen into it. If
r Brother be overtaken with the Sin of
runkenneſs, Whoredome, prophane Swear-
g and curſing, or the Prophanation of the
oly Sabbath, or any other ſuch like Sins and
ces; it is a Brotherly part and Duty to
k out thoſe motes out of our Brothers eye,
ith a Soft and mild Tongue, by a Gentle
d Chriſtian reproofe; tenderly admoniſh-
g our Brother, that he would Sin no more
ſt a worſe thing come unto him. And oh!
hat this were more in Practice amongſt
, that Chriſtians would endeavour more
d more, to caſt ſuch Motes, out of each o-
ers eyes, and thus lick them with an holy
d Heavenly Tongue, out of a juſt and due
ſpect to the Glory of God; and the eter-
l Happineſs of each other.

Surely it cannot be lamented enough,
at this Duty of Brotherly admonition and
riſtian Reproofe; is ſo little practiced by,
d amongſt Chriſtians. Were there more true

real

real Christion Love amongst us; we should Strive more by this meanes, to cast the Motes out of each others eyes. I'll not say, how often we are thus to endeavour the Purging and cleansing our Brothers eyes, from the Motes of Sin that are in, and the Scurfe of Prophaneness that Grows upon them. But if we Find there is no hope of licking our Brotheren whole, if all our Gentle and mild attempts to reforme them, Prove ineffectiual; if it be an old Sore and distemper under which our Brother Labours: we are then to make use of another remedy; and try if this running Plague and Issue can be Stopt by the Execution of *Justice*. We are then out of a Brotherly Christian respect, to represent such Persons unto the *Magistrates* as Offenders; who are a terrour unto evil doers, and who are said in Scripture, † *not to bear the Sword in vain, but to be the Ministers of God, and Revengers to Execute wrath upon them that do evil.*

† *Rom* 13. 3. 4.

We read that some *Devils* were not cast out, but with great difficulty. So we may expect that the cure of our Sining Brethren or a work of Reformation, upon those who have been long accustomed unto Sin; will not be effected and wrought with a little adoe. There is now a remedy in the Law for all Impudent and Impenitent Transgressours, and were it but duely apply'd there are great hopes of a good Opperation. We have known and Heard of some, who

have

have Spent their ſubſtance upon Phiſicians, for the cureing of a diſeaſed and infirm Body: and yet after all, they have carryed their Diſtempers to their Graves. But were we ſo kind and Charitable to our Brethern, that Labour under Spiritual Maladies, and have the ſad Symtoms of eternal Death upon them; as to put them to the expences and Charge, of paying ſo much (as the Law directs) for every prophane Oath and curſe, ſo much for being Drunk, and ſo much for the prophanation of the holy Sabbarh; it might have an Happy Tendency, not onely to avert the heavy Judgments of God, that at this day threaten our Land, but alſo towards the everlaſting Salvation of their Precious and Immortal Souls,

I know very well, that ſuch Indications of our Chriſtian Love, are no ways Pleaſing unto Fleſh and Blood; and they will be ſomething Strange at the Firſt; becauſe wickedneſs and Impiety hath gone ſo long, with an open Braſen Face. The power and Practice of Religion and Godlineſs hath lien long out of doors; and we have been greatly pleaſed with the Speculative part only. The great noiſe for theſe many Years, in this part of the Chriſtian world, hath been about the Lighter matters of the Law, *Mint, Anniſs, and Cummin*; Meats and Drinks, wherein the Kingdom of God doth not

conſiſt. The great talk and Zeal hath been about things leſs Neceſſary, and more abſcure and doubtfull; men doting about Queſtions, and Strifes of words, whereof cometh envy, Strife, Railings and evil Surmiſeings. This is that, with which we have been but too much taken up, for a long time.

Now I ſay, that tho' the Preſſing upon People a life and practice, Suitable to their Chriſtian profeſſion, will be ſome thing unpleaſing at the firſt: Yet we muſt not gratifie, and Humour Inſincere people, in their Soft and delicate ſelf choſen Religion: ſhould we thus doe, we ſhould not be faithfull to the Souls of our Brethren; whoſe grand Intereſt and Neceſſary concernment, is to live in the Power and Practice of Godlineſs and Religion. This is abſolutely neceſſary to be Taught and Preſt with all Authority; it matters not, that the Carnal and Senſual Perſon doth not Reliſh it: For we are herein to Imitate carefull and Prudent Phyſicians, who when they come to their Patients, do not ask them what they Love beſt, and then Preſcribe what is moſt pleaſing to their Pallats, tho' moſt hurtfull; but Informeing themſelves well of the Caſe of the diſeaſed, they Preſcribe and prepare what they judge to be moſt Proper for them, tho' it be no whit Gratefull, or acceptable to them.

Now

Now there are three Special Benefits, that ariſe from this Chriſtian Charitable reprehenſion and admonition, which may be as ſo many Arguments, to enforce upon us the Practices of this Duty.

1 By this meanes, our Offending and Sinning Brethern may be reformed. And indeed this is the Primary end of Chriſtian reproofe; even the reformation and amendment of our Brother, and how Bleſſed a work this is; * *Let him know that he that converteth the Sinner from the errour of his ways, ſhall ſave a Soul from Death, and ſhall hide a Multitude of Sins.* *Jam.* 5. 20.

2 By this Chriſtian reprehenſion and admonition, others may be brought to take warning, *Smite a Scorner and the ſimple will beware; and reprove one that hath underſtanding, and he will underſtand Knowledge. Alterius Perditio ſit tua cautio.* When we behold other men Ship-wrackt, this may make us look well to our own Tackling. O how uſefull Profitable may the reproving of one Sinner be to many others? This may have a Happy tendency to the promoting a work of Reformation in others. *Prove.* 19. 25.

3 He who lives in the Practice of this Chriſtian Duty of Brotherly Reprehenſion and Admonition; ſhall be Sure to deliver

his own Soul, and procure a Bleſſing upon himſelf. *But to them that rebuke the wicked ſhall be delight; and a good Bleſſing ſhall come upon them.* Read alſo *Levit.* 19. 17. *Thou ſhalt not hate thy Brother in thine Heart; but ſhalt in any wiſe reprove him, and not ſuffer Sin to be upon him.* Not to reprove our Brother when he Sins? and not to Warn him when Guilty of Sinfull Practices, is an Argument of our hating our Brother. Yea if we Suffer our Brother to Sin, who upon Chriſtian Reprehenſion, or Information to ſome Lawfull Magiſtrate, might be amended; we ſhall bear his Sin for him. *Qui Emendare Poteſt, et negligit, Participem Se facit*; ſaith one. He that can reforme another, and doth not, maketh himſelf partaker of his Sin. And thus I have done with the Firſt Propoſition in the Text; it is the Second I intend to Speak more fully to.

Prov. 24, 24, 25.

2 *Propoſition.* That for our more Regular, omfortable and Succeſsfull performing this Chriſtian Brotherly Office, of caſting the Mote out of our Brothers eye, we ſhould Firſt take care, to caſt the Beams out of our own (Firſt caſt the Beam out of thine own eye, and then ſhalt thou See clearly, to caſt the mote out of thy Brothers eye.) One that would reform another, whether he be Magiſtrate, or a Miniſter, or a private Perſon ſhould Firſt take care to Reform himſelf.

This

This is the thing that every one who promotes the work of Reformation in others, should be especially carefull of. Reformers should be examples of all purity, Chastity, meekness, Temperance and Heavenly mindedness; and then may they with comfort, set upon the Practice of this Christian Brotherly Duty of Reforming others.

Not, but that we may all know very well, what a thankless Office, the Office of a Reformer is; or one that Promotes the Reformation of Sinners. There are but too many Scorners, who hate to be reformed, and make a Mock of Sin. And tho' all be not thus wicked; yet it is rare to meet with a Person, who thinks not hardly of those who do admonish him. This was the frame and Temper of Spirit the *Sodomites* were of, when but Gently reproved by holy *Lot*; *my Brethern do not so wickedly.* Yet for this † *Gen.* 19. 7. they thought hardly of him. † *What, will this Fellow be a judge, that came but the other day to Sojourne?* Ver: 9. of the Same Chapter. So we Read, that the Prophet doth but find Fault with *Amaziah*, and presently the Kings eyes are Blinded, * *And his heart hardened, and he Answers the Prophet, who made you of the Kings Councill?* He looked on the Prophet a Medling Person, as a busie body in other mens Matters; as one that had a mind to Prie into State affaires. * 2 *Chron.* 25. 16.

So

So when the Blind man did but find fault
Joh. 9. 34. with the *Phariſees*, for their perſecuteing of *Chriſt*, how do they take it at his Hands. Art thou altogether conceived and Born in Sin, and wilt thou teach us? They quickly looked upon his Blindneſs and Birth, and concluded he was a greater Sinner then other men, and therefore could not think, he ſhould reform them. If we would take upon us the Office of reforming others, we ſhould take care that we be of unblameable Lives our ſelves. This is our firſt work; we muſt begin at home, and Sweep clean before our own doors, before we find fault with our Neigbour. We ſhould firſt get the Beams out of our own eyes, before we attempt to caſt the Motes out of our Brothers eyes. Let the *Phiſician* firſt cure himſelf; and then he will have more Patients, and may, with greater Encouragement, begin to Practice.

But here I come to ſpeak to three things. 1*ſt*. I ſhall ſhew you, who are to reforme themſelves. 2*d*. I ſhall ſhew you, of what they ſhou'd reforme themſelves. 3*d*. why they ſhould firſt reforme themſelves before they ſet upon this work of reforming others.

1 I ſhall ſhew you who are to Reform themſelves. And in the general; all are to reforme and livean holy, Examplary life and converſation

verſation. All perſons are to Set about this great and needfull work, both high and low, Rich and poor, Male and Female, bond and Free; Perſons of all Ranks, degrees and Qualities whatſoever; from him that Sitteth upon the Throne; to the Hewers of Wood, and drawers of Water. There is not one that can plead an Immunity, and exemption, from this ſo Neceſſary and Important a Duty; None that can truely ſay, I'm left to my own Choyce, whether I will Reform or no; but all are to Set upon this work of ſelf Reformation. Particularly.

1 This is the work of all Magiſtrates; of all who Handle the Sword of *Juſtice.* They eſpecially are to reform. This is the Duty of great men, and men in place and Power. It's not the Duty and part of the Poorer and Meaner Sort of People onely; but a work for the more Rich and Honourable, and ſuch whoſe place and Office is to Puniſh others that Offend.

Not the poor onely, that are to reform of their Intemperance, uncleanneſs, Prophane Curſing and Swearing, and the prophanation of the holy Sabbath, but the Brother of high degree is to Engage himſelf in it. Theſe are the Perſons that ſhould make ſure of a ſelf Reformation: For the greater the perſons, the greater are their Sins. And the groſs Immoralityes of

many Magiſtrates are no Small cauſe of that great Inundation of Impiety and Prophaneneſs, that hath overſpread the Face of this *Kingdom*; and there's cold hopes of Setling this Bleſſed work of Reformation in any good Succeſsfull method; till ſuch time as Magiſtrates, who have the Sword of *Juſtice*, are either reformed, or removed. With what face and courage can a prophane Magiſtrate execute the Laws, or the Penalties of the Laws, againſt prophaneneſs. * *Therefore thou art inexcuſable, O man, whoſoever thou art that Judgeſt: for wherein thou Judgeſt another, thou condemneſt thy ſelf; for thou that Judgeſt, doſt the ſame things.* Read alſo, *verſe* the 21, 22, 23. of the ſame Chap. Thou therefore that Teacheſt another; Teacheſt thou not thy ſelf, Thou who ſayeſt a man ſhould not commit adultery, doſt thou commit Adultery. Magiſtrates whoſe Office is to Puniſh others for their Violations of the Law; ſhould look to obſerve the Law themſelves. They ſhould be of holy unblameable Lives and converſations.

* *Rom*, 2, 1,

2 This ſelf Reformation is the work of all Miniſters. They of all Perſons, ſhould look after this work, and approve their works to the Lord. Thus the Apoſtle Exhorts *Timothy*, *Till I come, give attendance to Reading, Exhortation and Doctrine.* and *verſe* the 16. *Take heed unto thy ſelf, and unto thy Doctrine;*

1 *Tim*, 4, 13,

Doctrine; *continue in them*; *For in so doing, thou shalt both save thy self and them that hear thee.* *Aarons* bells Hung at his Feet, What an uncomely thing it is, for a Prophane Minister to Preach against Prophaneness. A Minister given to Swearing, Preach against it; or a Minister given to Intemperance, Preach against it? *Turpe est Doctori, cum culpa redarguit ipsum.* How harsh and unpleasing is it, to hear Vice correcting Sin? *Clodius accusat Moechos.* The Sins of a Minister are very Dangerous, how fine soever his Preaching be, for his Practice will goe further then his Preaching; and they who Forget his Sermon, will remember his Example. If a Minister be but a little leavened, it is much if most of his Auditory be not Sowred thereby. If the Nurse be Sick, the Child that Sucks the Breast, is in Danger to Suck the disease from her. O how much doth it concern Ministers to lead holy and Heavenly Lives! † *Thou who Preachest a man should not Steal*; *dost thou Steal*? dost thou commit Adultery? Art thou covetous and contentious? Art thou unclean and Intemperate? And Preachest against all these things? Ministers should Especially be of inoffensive Lives, because it is their work and Office, to Preach this up to others. They should as much as possible be free from all Sin; because they Preach against all Sin, and are to reprove with an holy boldness every Sin, be it in who it will, Poor or Rich, Small or Great

† *Rom.* 2. 21.

great. It is ſaid of *Tacitues* that he took the ſame Liberty to write the Emperous lives that they took in leading them. Thus ſhould the Miniſters doe in reproving of Sinners. But how can a Miniſter do thus, unleſs he be unblameable himſelf? The Sharpeſt Sermons of a wicked Prophane Miniſter, againſt Groſs Sins and Immoralities, are but like a Smooth, File; or a Saw whoſe Teeth are broken; or a Knife that hath loſt it's edge.

3 This ſelf Reformation is the work of all private Perſons; of all who would draw the Motes out of their Brothers eyes. They ſhould begin here Firſt, and reform themſelves. The converſations of all men, even of private Perſons, as well as Magiſtrates, and Miniſters, ſhould correſpond and comport with that holy profeſſion which they make. What have we to doe with any baſe and ſordid Practice; who lie under the Sacred vows of the Chriſtian Religion? I know indeed it is a moſt Lamentable thing, to ſee men call themſelves Sons of the Church, by a Subſcription to her *Articles*, aſſume to themſelves the Title of Orthodox; and yet be the greateſt Blemiſhes of it; and forfeit that worthy appellation, by holding the Truth in unrighteouſneſs, Liveing as if the commandments had no Relation to the Creed; or as if by the Beliefe of what is

true

true, they could Satisfie for what is Evil. *Pudet hæc opprobria Nobis &c.* We may Bluſh at this ſo great wickedneſs. It was a charge long ago laid upon Chriſtianity; That it was better known in the Leaves of Books, then in the lives of Chriſtians; and hence it is, that many are hardened in their wickedneſs. It is the purity of Chriſtians lives, that is the beſt attractive to winn others to the Love of Religion. This is the Gold that ſhould overlay the Temple of Chriſts Church: and would make others in Love with i'ts Beauty. This was one Happy means for the incredible increaſe of converts, in the Primitive times; even the holy and examplary Lives of Chriſtians. But converts came in Slower when thoſe who profeſſed Religion, began to cool in their Zeal, and Slacken in the Strictneſs of their Lives. Thus you ſee all are to Set upon this work of ſelf reformation; not only Magiſtrates and Miniſters, but alſo private Perſons, all who take upon them the Office of reformers.

2 I come now to Shew you, of what we all muſt reform ouy ſelves. And that I may not be tedious in Numbering particulars, I'll onely ſay in the Generall; we are to Reform of all Sins. We are to abandon every evil way; we muſt not onely take care to avoid thoſe Sins, whereof we accuſe and condemn our Brother, but we ſhould free our ſelves from Sin in every kind.

Tho'

Tho' we be no Swearers, no Drunkards, or Whoremaſters, or prophaners of the Sabbath; tho' we be free from thoſe Sins, which bring us under the laſh of the Law; yet we may be very unfit to reform others. There may be Beams in our own eyes, that ſhould Firſt be caſt out, before we attempt the Reformation of our Brethern.

There are indeed a Sort of Perſons, who if they do not live in Whoredom, and Groſs Intemperance; open Prophaneneſs, and Brutiſh ſenſuality, think all is well with them, and they cry out with the *Phariſee*, that they are not as other men are; Extortioners, unjuſt, Adulterers: whereas they may be free from theſe more Groſs Practices, and yet need to be reformed, as well as others. O! be not deceived, you are not Poſſibly ſo and ſo Vitious in your outward converſation; but if there be within of the Heart, malice, hatred, envy, uncharitableneſs, ſelf exalting, Inordinate affections to the world, Covetouſneſs &c. Theſe are enough to diſcourage a man from his Duty of reforming others; and may deſervedly bring him under the denomination of a wicked Perſon, that needs to be reformed. You will grant the Devils are bad-enough; it is becuaſe of their Pride, envy &c. For the Groſs Sins of the Fleſh, they are not lyable to them. Sirs! do we

ſee

ſee one living a Bruitiſh Senſual life, wallowing in his filthy luſts, laying the reins upon the Neck of his Impetuous corruptions; ſuch a one is to be reformed? I, but would you Set about this work comfortably, and effectually; you muſt not onely free your ſelves from the Sins of which you would reform your Brother, but alſo from all Sins in every kind? If you be worldly, proud, Haughty, and be under the Power of earthly affections, you ſhould reform your ſelves, and caſt thoſe Beams out of your own eyes Firſt, before you attempt to caſt the Motes out of your Brother's eyes.

3 I Now come to ſhew you why, and upon what account we ſhould thus endeavour to reform our Selves, before we begin to reform others.

REASONS,

1 Unleſs we have (in ſome good degree) a clear conſcience, and be of an unblameable life; we cannot find fault with our Brother, and begin to reform him; but we Sin againſt our Office whether he be a Magiſtrate that is to Puniſh offenders, or a Miniſter that Preacheth againſt Sin, or a private Perſon that reproves for Sin, or gives Information to the Magiſtrate againſt ſuch a Sin; unleſs he be ſomething clear in his own

own Conſcience he cannot diſcharge this Dnty towards his Brother but he Sins againſt his Office, and that becauſe the Office of a reformer Binds him to be holy, and of an unblameable life; what the Apoſtle ſaith of Goſpel *Biſhops*; may be ſaid of all that take upon them the Office of Reform-
1 *Tim.* 3. 2. ers, They ſhould themſelves be Blameleſs. If a man would Reform another of Swearing, he himſelf ſhould be one that Fears an Oath; or if he would reform another of Drunkenneſs, he himſelf ſhould be very Temperate; if of uncleanneſs, he himſelf ſhould be very Chaſt. If a man would Reform another of being contentious, and Quarrelſome, he himſelf ſhould be meek and Peaceable. If a man would Reform ano-
Gal. 6 4 ther of being carnal; he, (*viz.*) The Reformer ſhould be Spirituall. If any man be overtaken with a fault, ye that are Spirituall, reſtore ſuch a one. The Reformer, the Reſtorer muſt be Spiritual, it is no going to caſt the Motes out of our Brothers eye, while we have Beams in our own.

2 Unleſs we be of inculpable lives, and have Conſciences (in ſome good degree) void of offence; we cannot reform our Brother, ſo mildly and ſo Softly, but we ſhall awaken our own Conſiences and put them upon the ſame Office of accuſing and Condemning us. What Stings and Gripes of Con-

Conſcience doth a man that is wicked (and conſcious to himſelf of his own wickedneſs) meet with, even when he is about to Reform others from their Sins? ſurely he cannot but think and think again, upon the Apoſtles words. † *Therefore thou art inexcuſable O man, whoſoever thou art that Judgeſt; for wherein thou Judgeſt another thou condemneſt thy ſelf; for thou that Judgeſt, doeſt the ſame things.* One who takes upon him the Office of a Reformer ſhould himſelf, be a Conſcientious Liver, otherwiſe he doth but make way for his own Conſcience to Sting and gnaw him. Nay, it is hard for a wicked man to put any Face upon a work of reformation. We may ſee this verified in the *Scribes* and *Phariſees*, in their accuſeing a Woman taken in adultery. *And they when they heard it; being convicted by their own Conſciences; went out, one by one, beginning at the eldeſt, even unto the Laſt.* They were ſomething Severe with this Woman, till *Chriſt* bid them look unto themſelves; and were for Stoneing her, or puting her to ſome cruel Death, till *Chriſt* directed them how to Stone her? he that is without Sin among you, Let him Firſt caſt a Stone at her. When they heard this, then their own Conſciences began to Rouſe up and awaken, whereupon they had none of them, the Face or Courage, to take up a Stone to Throw at this Woman. Therefore it con-

† *Rom.* 2. 1.

concerns us all to set upon this work of self Reformation; in the First place, to cast the Beams out of our own eyes First, before we attempt to cast the Motes out of our Brothers eyes.

3 Except we be of an holy unblameable Life, the reproof we give to others, will but be retorted upon our selves, and cast as dung in our own Faces. One that is not of a Serious, sober, conscientious life, can Scarce find fault with his Offending Brother, but it's a Thousand to one, he hears of his own Miscarriages; and if his weak Brother have a hole in his Coat, at the time he is Reprooved, he will rent it out. A man cannot goe about to reform his Brother, but he will Instantly bring in the eyes of all others upon himself. All mens eyes are upon a reformer; and they look Strictly and very observingly upon such a Person; and if any thing in the world be amiss in such a man; they will be sure to mark it, and make more adoe of that then if it had been some greater fault in another Person. And how common a thing is it to see the reproof given retorted and cast in the teeth of him that gives it. What, do you reprove me of Sin? who is a greater Sinner then your self? Doe you tell me of my Swearing, Intemperance, uncleaneness and the like, Who more addicted to such Sins then

then your ſelf? Pray begin at Home, Reforme your ſelf. Some mens repooſes doe Recoil upon themſelves. And indeed every one deſires, if it muſt be Smitten, that it may be by the Hand of the Righteous. * *Let the Righteous ſmite me, it ſhall be a Kindneſs; and let him reprove me, it ſhall be an excellent Oyl, which ſhall not break my Head.* The good advice of a wicked man, is Spoil'd by the Stinking breath of him that gives it. * Pſal. 141. 5.

4 Unleſs we be ſomething clear in our Conſciences, and be of holy unblameable Lives; our Reforming others from their Sins, will but be looked upon as a piece of Prevarication, and *Hipocrſie* with Almighty God. This you have Eſpecially noted in the Text, thou *Hipocrite* Firſt caſt out the Beam out of thine own eye, and then ſhalt thou ſee clearly to caſt out the Mote out of thy Brothers eye. Without this all our repooſes and admonitions, all our Complaints and Informations, in order to Reforme our Brother, will be looked upon, as a peice of Mockery. And indeed, what can be a greater piece of mockery then this, to cry out of Sin in others, and commit it our ſelves? Sirs will you cry out, and Complain of your Brothers faults, and never look upon your own! what is this but *Hypocriſie*? thou

Hipocrite First caſt out the Beam out of thine own eye. When a man goes to find fault with another, before he hath Reformed himſelf, this is *Hipocriſie*, for when a man Reformes another, he takes upon him a form of one that is zealous againſt Sin, and an Enemy to all Sinfull Practices; Now what is this but *Hipocriſie*? And indeed this is the way of the *Hipocrite*, to fault others for what he himſelf is Guilty of.

5 To Reforme another before we have Reformed our ſelves, is that which carries ſelf Condemnation a long with it. † *Thou Condemneſt thy ſelf; for thou that judgeſt doth the ſame things.* To condemn another for Sin, when we are Sinners our ſelves; is to Condemn our ſelves at the ſame time. We expoſe our ſelves to the juſt Judgment of the great God, who ſees all our works and Actions. And what an odd and abſurd thing is it, to find fault with others, for what we doe our ſelves. How ill doth the word of reproofe Sound in the Mouth of a wicked Perſon. To Steal and yet forbid Stealing; to Swear our ſelves, and yet forbid Swearing; To be Covetous, contentious, and yet cry out againſt theſe Sins in others; What is this but to draw down Judgments upon our ſelves?

† *Rom.* 2, 1.

ſelve. Therefore that we may diſcharge this our Chriſtian Office and Duty to our Brother, caſting the Motes out of his eyes, we ſhould Firſt take care to caſt the Beams out of our own. This is the way and courſe we ſhould take, in Promoting a work of Reformation And indeed we cannot expect to be very ſucceſsfull in any of our endeavours to reform others, till ſuch time as we have done thus much for our ſelves.

I Now come to the Improvement and Application of this Point; and that Firſt by way of Inference, ſhould we Reform our ſelves before we begin to Reform our Brother? Then

1 This may let all of us ſee wherein we have miſt. For how often have *Magiſtrates*, *Miniſters* and private Perſons gone Irregularly about this work. Let the *Magiſtrate* firſt Reforme himſelf, and then he may better ſee how to execute *Juſtice* upon Offenders; Let the *Miniſter* firſt Reforme himſelf, and then he may better ſee how to Preach this up to others; Let a private Chriſtian firſt reforme himſelf, and then he will ſee better how to reforme his Brother; Let us caſt the Beams out of our own eyes firſt, and then we ſhall ſee more clearly to caſt the Motes

out of our Brother's eyes. How have we all been guilty of this *Hyſteron Proteron*, of putting the firſt thing in the Second place. Have we not begun at the wrong end of our work, and inverted the order of our duties, True! it is a duty to Reforme our Brother; but the duty of ſelf reformation, ſhould take the Firſt place. They are both Duties; but in the order; of Nature, the one ſhould preceed the other; we ſhould Firſt caſt the Beams out of our own eyes, before we caſt the Motes out of our Brother's eyes. And indeed I cannot but think, one great cauſe and reaſon, why *Magiſtrates* have been no more a terror unto evil doers; and *Miniſters* no more ſucceſsfull in their work, is becauſe both have been too Remiſs in their reformeing themſelves. They have not been thoſe holy examples unto others, as their Office and place required. So that all our Sermons againſt impiety and Prophaneneſs; through our own Perſonall Miſcarriages, have been but like arrows ſhot out of a weak bow, that comes not with force Sufficient to prick the Heart of the Proud Sinner. *Miniſters* may complaine of the ill Succeſs of their Labours, when they take no care to Practice what they Preach to others. In vaine doe they think to reforme their People, till ſuch times as they firſt reforme themſelves.

Should

Should we firſt Reforme our ſelves before we reforme our Brother? Then

2 This brings to all our mindes what is our work to day or where we are to begin the work of Reformation. We ſhould begin in the Firſt place with our Selves. Whoever would Promote a Reformation work; muſt begin here. Let every man Sweep his own door and the Streets will be clean. So would every man Purge and cleanſe his own Heart, this work of Reformation would goe on in every place. A generall Reformation hath it's Riſe and beginning in Particular. There muſt be a Perſonall Reformation before it come to a Family. City, Countrey, or National Reformation.

This is the work of every particular Perſon. So that every one of us may ſay Particularly, this is my work, my care; we are to begin with our ſelves, and not ſuffer any unmortified luſt to abide in us, every eye that Offends, every hand that Sins, every Luſt that provokes, is to be parted with; tho' never ſo dear unto us: we muſt begin with our ſelves, and then in our Families, our Children and Servants, and endeavour the Reformation of all that are under our care and Charge. This is the way to promote this Bleſſed work of

Refor-

Reformation, here we are to begin, we ſhould take this courſe, and obſerve this rule, and Labour with all care and Conſcience, to be unblameable in our ſelves and Converſations. And O that both you and I might begin here this day with our ſelves, with our own Hearts, and lives, and caſt the Beams out of our own eyes! And to excite you to this work of ſelf Reformation, to preſs upon you the power of Godlineſs, and the Practice of Religion; I would recommend unto you theſe following Conſiderations.

1 Conſider it is in vain to think the knowledge and Beliefe of the Chriſtian Religion, will availe us any thing without the Practice of it. † *If any man among you ſeem to be Religious, and Bridleth not his Tongue, but deceiveth his own Heart, that mans Religion is vain; pure Religion and undefiled, before God and the Father, is this; to viſit the Fatherleſs and the Widows, in their Affliction; and to keep himſelf unſpotted from the world.* * *If a man conſent not to the Doctrine which is according to Godlineſs, he is proud, knowing nothing.*

† Jam. 1 26, 27.

* 1 Tim. 6. 3.

There muſt be a decorum kept between our Principles and our Practice. Our eyes ſhould direct our Feet, and we are called upon in Scripture to act as becometh Saints,

† As

† *As becomes the Gospel of Christ.* * *As becomes those who profess Godliness.* There is a † τὸ πρέπον Or comely Behaviour, which if a Christian doth not observe, he betrayes his high calling unto Scorn and and contempt, to look high and to live Low; O how rediculous appears it unto all men. It is not a forgetfull Hearer but a doer of the word, This man shall be Blessed in his deed. It is the doeing Practicall Christian that shall Stand, when the empty Boaster of his Faith shall fall. His Religion is vain, which brings not Letters Testimoniall from an holy Life. A *Protestant* Faith without a *Protestant* Practice is worth little. There are but too many, who think it's enough they are no *Papists*, nor *Atheists*, no *Hereticks*, or Erroneous Persons, but they Embrace, the Honest, old *Orthodox* truths, they Believe as well as any, and they are resolved to live and die in this Faith. They are *Protestant* in Doctrine, and Recusants in lives, not Considering that Hell is full, not onely of *Pagans* and *Heathens*, but also of ungodly Christians. Alas the Kingdom of God reacheth further then the understanding onely; The *Devils* in Hell have admirable Knowledge, they both know and Believe, for they are said to Believe and tremble. And doe we not read of * *Many, that shall be brought in at that day, saying, Lord, Lord,*

* Rom. 16 2.
† Ephe. 5. 3
† Phil. 1, 27.
* Mat. 7. 22, 23.

have we not Propheſied in thy name, and in thy name caſt out Devils, and in thy name, done many wonderfull works? And yet Chriſt will ſay unto them, depart from ye workers of Iniquity; I know you not. If we renounce hereſy and error in Doctrine, why not prophaneneſs in our lives.

2 Conſider that the Moral Gentiles and
† Mat. 12. 41, 42. *Heathens*, will one day, riſe up to condemn Immoral, and Prophane Chriſtians. † *The men of Nineveh ſhall riſe up in Judgement with this Generation, and ſhall Condemn it; becauſe they repented at the Preaching of Jonas, and behold a Greater then Jonas is here. The Queen of the South ſhall riſe up in Judgement with this Generation, and ſhall Condemn it; For She came from the utermoſt Parts of the Earth, to hear the Wiſdom of Solomon; and be-*
* Mat. 11. 21. *hold a Greater then Solomon is here.* * *Wo unto thee Chorazin, Wo unto thee Bethſaida: for if the mighty works, which were done in you, had been done in Tyre and Sydon, they would have repented long ago, in Sack-Cloth and Aſhes.* What fear and horror hath been upon *Heathens* Spirits, tho' they have had no Scripture to accuſe them? *Hyſtories* declare, that upon unjuſt, uncleane and Injurious Actions, they have not been able to reſt or Sleep. What ſayings have they to recommeud a virtuous life. *Hic murus aheneus eſto, nil conſcire Sibi, nulla Palleſcere culpa.*

ulpa. To be conſcious to a Mans ſelf of o evil, nor unjuſt action; is that only hing that may make a Man happy. That razen Wall that will beat back all darts. Oh that Chriſtians ſhould do ſo many hings to raiſe up Conſcience like a Lion nd Bear to roar within them, when even Heathens have been affraid to make their Conſcience their Enemy and Adverſary! How Moderate and Temperate were ma- y of them in their Meats and Drinks? *eneca*, *Plutarch*, *Plato*, and ſome of the *toicks*, ſpeak very high things about that hich is virtuous. Now what a Reproach s it to the glorious Goſpel, which we re- eive, to be out-done by them? What, hall not the Word of God and the Goſ- el of Chriſt teach us more Holineſs then he *Turks Alcoran*? Shall not the Ten Commandments of God oblige us to more urity then the twelve Tables of the *omans*? O what a ſad diſhonour is this o the Truth and Knowledge of God! That among his People, ſhould be found oers of thoſe things which natural light ould abhor.

Surely we can never grieve enough, to e how many have no better a Title to eligion, then what they can challenge y virtue of an over eager oppoſition, a- ainſt a diſſenting party; and have no Argu-

Arguments to evidence their Chriſtianity except their Zeal in controverted poin may paſs for a demonſtration of it; a counting ſatyrical invectives and bitter re flections, to be inſtances of a Religiou zeal for God; which are but demonſtra tions of their own folly and weakneſs doteing upon thoſe Images and Repre ſentations, which their abuſed fancies hav ſuggeſted to them!

3 Conſider that the degeneracy of th human nature appears in nothing more then in Mens proſeliting themſelves t bruitiſh ſenſuality, wherein indeed th Beaſts do ovtvie them; as being furniſhe with greater exquiſitneſs of ſenſe for th entertainment of ſenſual Pleaſures. An yet how many are there, who Sacrifice thei Reaſon to their Appetite; and ſink them ſelves into a lower ſpecies; placing th Beaſt above the Man; in purſuing no o ther things then what may gratifie thei carnal Luſts? It is an opinion no le falſe in it ſelf, then pernicious in its e fects, to all true Godlineſs; That Piet divorceth its Proſelytes from all pleaſan enjoyments, and eſpouſeth them to a me lancholy and ſorrowful ſpirit: where the time, when all true comfort bear date, is the Commencement of an hol and Religious Life. And could we per

ſwad

ſwade Men to make an experiment of what we ſay; they would ſoon conclude, that the gleanings of Divine Joy are infinitely to be preferred, before the Vintage of Worldly Pleaſures.

4. Conſider that the conſtant Practiſe of Piety, and the conſcientious performing of Religious Duties, would ſoon overcome all thoſe trifling prejudices, wherewith the minds of many are prepoſeſſed. There are no ſuch inſuperable difficulties in the leading of an holy Life, as ſome do ſuggeſt to themſelves. The Lion in this way is not ſo fierce as he is painted. There are no ſuch dreadful apparitions in an holy Life, as a carnal deluded imagination repreſents. The difficulties that occur in a Chriſtian courſe, are not half ſo many and great as they are made to be, by perſons prejudiced againſt it. Men firſt draw the Picture of an Holy Life, with a ſad and lowring countenance, and then they take occaſion to diſlike it. An Holy and Religious Life, looks upon us, with a ſerene and pleaſant Aſpect, and puts us upon no task, which our diligent endeavours ſhall not overcome, and conquer. The Duties of a Chriſtian, in a little time, become eaſie and feaſible. Every Virtue is more facile and eaſy then its oppoſite Vice.

5. Conſider

5. Consider the Promise and assurance of a Reward, infinitely above the labour of any services that God requires, tends to the facilitateing of this necessary Work. That exceeding and eternal weight of Glory, which is promised to all that are truly Godly, is a powerful inducement to engage unto the practise of an Holy Religious Life. This is sufficient to make the roughest places smooth, and level the highest Mountains into a plain, and make the Torrid Zone temperate. In the view of this Glory, all difficulties are swallowed up; and the edge of all dangers turned. The encouragement to duty doth infinitely preponderate the difficulty of it. What tho we should a little prick our fingers, to get the Rose of *Sharon*; and smite our foot on the stony Mountain, to gather the Lilly of the Valleys? What tho we toil all night, when we are certain of such a rich draught in the Morning.

6. Consider that the assistance of the Spirit, so frequently promised in Holy Scripture, makes the power of Godliness, and the practise of Religion facile and easy. God doth not break the bruised Reed, nor quench the smoaking Flax, nor despise the day of small things; insomuch that

hat tho many Duties of Religion be ac-
ounted difficult; yet thoſe who give up
hemſelves to the conſcientious perform-
nce of them, have that aſſiſtance from an
nſeen hand, which facilitates and ſweetens
heir hardeſt labours.

7. Conſider the ſeverity and juſt diſ-
leaſure of God, which you expoſe your
ſelves unto, by your reiterated acts of Sin
nd Diſobedience. The Apoſtle was well
cquainted with the force of this Argu-
ment, * *knowing the Terror of the Lord, we*
erſwade Men. Let us then think, if we
an bear the indignation of the Lord, and
ſtand before the power of his Anger. Can
we dwell with devouring fire, and lie
down in everlaſting burnings? *&c.*

2 Cor. 5. 11.

8. Conſider that there is an Intrinſique
weakneſs writ upon all thoſe ſerene, and
tranſitory delights; which makes them un-
worthy the purſuit of thoſe who are truly
wiſe. Thoſe ſublunary ſinful Pleaſures,
like Flowers wither in our hands, and
periſh in our embraceings. They ſalute
our ſenſes, and then bid an eternal fare-
wel. The Heavenly Herauld, who knew
very well how to blazen this Worlds
Coat of Arms, tells us it is made up of
fading Flowers; when we come to gaſpe
theſe things, they are but wind, and to
embrace

embrace them they are but a cloud. Thus you ſee, how much it doth concern us to live in the diligent, and Conſcientious practiſe of Religious Duties; to ſet about this neceſſary work of ſelf Reformation, and be of inoffenſive and unblameable Lives.

But methinks I here ſome one ſay, What ſhall I do that I may Reform my ſelf; or what courſe ſhall I take that I may promote this neceſſary work of ſelf-reformation? And if there be any perſwaded (by what I have ſaid) to ſet upon the Practiſe of this Duty: I would further encourage them by preſcribing the following Directions.

If we would reform our ſelves, and abandon theſe courſes we have lien wallowing in. 1. We ſhould engage in this work with a full purpoſe, and reſolution to make our way through the greateſt difficulties and ſeverities that are in it. It muſt be granted that an Holy Religious Life is not eaſy unto Fleſh and Blood: And the way of ſin is not relinguiſht, without ſome Reluctancy at the firſt. The ſtrong Man armed will not preſently quit his Houſe and peaceably ſurrender to an Holy courſe: the Right hand cannot be cut off, and the Right Eye pluckt out, without ſome difficulty

lty. The new Birth is not accompliſh-
without ſome throws, and the Devil
ill rage, when diſpoſeſſed. But to thoſe
ho put on reſolution and courage, and
ſolve to make their way over all Rubs
d Remora's; it doth at laſt become
ſy and pleaſant. It is only burdenſome
thoſe who are weak through ſinful In-
rmities; and painful only to ſuch who
bour under their own dull and idle Spi-
ts: if any therefore would ſet upon this
ork, they muſt do it with courage. We
uſt put on Heroical Reſolutions, and
outly oppoſe the Impetuous deſires of our
nſitive powers.

2. If we would reform our ſelves, we
uſt then deny the firſt ſolicitations, and
ſiſt the firſt motions of an Inordinate
ppetite. We muſt depreſs them, at the
rſt riſing, and quench Luſt when it be-
ins to ſmoak, before it break out into a
ame: For then it will be unruly, and
o hard to maſter, and keep under; we
all beſt ſilence the clamours and impor-
nities of a Temptation, by not liſtening
o them; for the yielding to commit a
in, leaves a greater propenſion, and deſire
o ſin again: we ſhould therefore carefully
heck the firſt riſings and Ebullitions of
ur depraved and corrupted Natures.

3. Would

3. Would we Reform our ſelves, and lead unblameable and inoffenſive lives? Then we muſt ſhew a more then ordinary ſeverity, againſt the ſins (that through Conſtitution or Cuſtom) we have the greateſt inclination unto. It is not ſo much as ſafe to argue with Temptations unto ſin; but we ſhould ſay to them, as our Saviour once ſaid to *Peter*, *Get thee behind me Satan, for thou ſavoureſt not the things that be of God.*

4. If we would reforme our ſelves; then we ought, as much as lies in our power, to ſhun whatſoever may probably be an occaſion of being tempted; eſpecially to ſuch ſins, as we are moſt inclined to. Are we prone to exceſs, either in Meat, or Drink? Are we apt ſuddenly to take fire, and to be enflamed with Paſſions? Are we of a Luſtful Temper, or the like? Then we ſhould carefully avoid, as much as we can, all ſuch places, company and objects, as may be incentives to thoſe Appetites. Thus in order to avoiding the Sin of Uncleanneſs, the Wiſe Man adviſeth, not to come near the houſe of the Whoriſh Woman. And for the prevention of the Sin of Drunkenneſs; not ſo much as to look on the Wine, when it is Red, and gives its Colour in the Glaſs. It is in vain to think

think of turning to God from our Sins: if we do not turn from the occasion of them. If we have not strength to turn from the occasion of Sin, which is the less; how can we avoid the Sin it self, which is the greater? He that resolves not to be burn't in the fire, must not come too near the flame. He that will not be inticed by the Adulterous Woman, must not come too near her dwelling. If we separate our selves first from the occasion of sinning, the Sin it self will be more easily subdued. As the Husbandman first cuts away the under bushes, and brambles; before he lays the Ax to the root of the Tree.

5. Would we Reform our selves? Then we should be sure to keep up, and retain these holy purposes, and Resolutions of a Reformation in us; some Men purpose to day to Reform, but are off it before to morrow. Their Holy Intentions and Resolutions are very short liv'd. There comes up a Worm that quickly consumes these Gourds; their purposes vanish without execution, and continue but for a Season. If we would Reform, our purposes and Resolutions should not be like Pilgrims and Strangers, that lodge but for a Night; but they should rather be like Men upon the Alter, that never goes out. *Hos. 6. 4.*

Those purposes that are not constant and Rooted, will die as soon as they begin to live.

6. Would we set upon this necessary work of Self-Reformation? Then let us go forth in the Grace and Power of God, and not in our own strength and skill. If we be not assisted with Power from above, our own courage, conduct and strength, will be too little and defective. It is no thinking to conquer our Lusts by our own wooden Sword, but we must fight with the Sword of the Spirit in this Holy War; we should then say to all our sins we intend to wage War with, as *David* did to *Goliah*: *I come unto thee in the Name of the Lord whom thou hast defied.* I set upon mortifying these sins, not by my own strength, but in the power of Christ whose glory and honour my Sins would take away.

7. Would we reform our selves? Then let us labour to be affected as much as possible, with the love of God, and of Divine things. If the love of God be perfected in us, we shall find the work of Self-Reformation, as pleasant, and easie, as heart can wish. Love will make us think nothing precious, that God will have us part with: it will make us willing and cheerful

nefs, part with a right eye, a right hand, any thing that is offenſive. This will cauſe us to believe no ſuffering harſh, that God ſhall inflict; and no duty difficult that he ſhall command. *This is the Love of God, that we keep his Commandments, and his Commandments are not grievous.* If you love me, is a familiar and powerful form of ſpeech with us, to perſwade one another to the doing, or forbearing any thing. And what humane love and affection doth work among Men; that, and much more will be effected by Divine love. It is love alone that is aſhamed to mention difficulty. Nay, love welcomes difficulties, and pleaſeth it ſelf in hard inſtances of obedience, becauſe, by them, it ſhews more of its real fervency. 1 Joh. 5. 3.

8 Would you reform your ſelves, and be helpt forward in this ſo Neceſſary a Duty? Then be often looking to thoſe lively Patterns and examples ſet before you in holy Scripture. Theſe are of Singular uſe, and advantage to be Seriouſly conſidered by you, for they plainly Shew the work not to be Impoſſible, and Impracticable. We have the example of ſome, who lived in Prophane places, have been compaſſed with all wickedneſs; and yet they have taken care in great meaſure, to keep themſelves unſpotted from the Sins of the time

and place wherein they lived; you read of a *Lot* in *Sodom*; of a *Moses*, who choſe rather to ſuffer Affliction, with the people of God, then to enjoy the Pleaſures of Sin, which are but for a ſeaſon; eſteeming the reproaches of *Chriſt* grater riches then the Treaſures of *Egypt*; and thereupon refuſed to be called the Son of *Phaoroh* daughter. *Nicodemus* a *Phariſee*, and a great man in the *Phariſees* Councill, yet this is a man, that feared God, and was not drawn aſide by their examples. Could they do thus, and cannot we, by the ſame Divine Power and help, do the like? They were men Subject to like Paſſions with us; they were Fleſh and Blood as we are, and Naturally weak and infirme as our ſelves, and God is the ſame in Power, and Goodneſs that he ever was. Here we have examples added unto rules, and paterns unto precepts. How many precepts have we in Scripture, to engage us to Chaſtity, Purity, Temperance, and to briety, meekneſs and patience, Faith and Charity, to an holy reſolvedneſs of owning God, and adhereing to his ways, and unweariedneſs in doeing good, and to every other Grace and Virtue,

* *Heb.* 11. 24. 25. 26.

And have we not (beſides others) the examples of *Joſeph* for Chaſtity; *Moſes* for Meekneſs, *Job* for Patience, *Abraham* for Faith

Faith, *Dorcas* and *Cornelius* out St. *Paul* for an unwearied zeal, and *Timothy* for Temperance, and Sobriety. And above all, that example of all examples, for every thing that is holy, pure and Lovely, our *Lord Jesus Christ*. Now whence is it that these holy examples are Recorded for us; but that we should make it our Serious care and holy ambition to transcribe their virtues, to write after these fair Copies they have set us, and be followers of those blessed Souls, who are now in a state of bliss and Glory.

9 That you may go forward with this Blessed work of reformation, ever when you begin to be weary, or faint in your mindes, then look unto *Jesus Christ*, as Crucified for you. † *Looking unto Jesus, the Author, and Finisher of our Faith, who (for the joy that was Set before him) endured the Cross, despised the Shame, and is now Set down at the right hand of God in Glory. For consider him that endured such Contradiction of Sinners, lest ye be weary, and faint in your mindes.* Who knows but our looking up to a Crucified *Christ* may have the same influence upon us, That a look of *Christ* had upon *Peter*, when he had thrice denied his Master? The Apostle then called to mind, what *Jesus* said unto him, and he went out and wept Bitterly. When we

† *Heb.* 12. 2, 3.

Con-

Consider how *Christ* was wounded for our Transgressions, and Bruised for our Iniquities; when we consider that we have Crucified the Lord of Life and Glory, that our Sins Nail'd him to the Crosse, wounded him the Heart, and put him to all the Griefe and Paines he underwent, how can we be deasly Affected to these vile Bodies, or Solicitous for the pleasing of our Apperites; and studious about those things which may be grateful to the Flesh? And as to the impure Pleasures of this world, no Consideration can be more Potent, to extinguish our desires to them, then the Consideration of *Christ* upon the Crosse.

FINIS.

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